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ON PAGE 1

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The Libyan connection: Web of intrigue, terror

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Former Green Beret tied to regime in murder case

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A former Green Beret, recently charged in last fall's attempted murder of a prominent Libyan dissident in Colorado, spent three months in Libya last summer on official business for the Libyan government, according to an official involved in the investigation.

In addition, investigators on the case have established links between the ex-Green Beret and a former CIA agent who is already under federal indictment in connection with using American mercenaries to run a terrorist training program for Libyan President Moammar Khadafy.

The ex-Green Beret, Eugene A. Tafoya, 45, of Truth or Consequences, N.M., is awaiting trial in Fort Collins, Colo., on charges he conspired and attempted to murder Faisal A. Zagallai, a Libyan graduate student at Colorado State University, and a leader among anti-Khadafy Libyans in the United States. Tafoya is being held in lieu of \$1 million bond, and no trial date has been set.

The shooting of Zagallai and the arrest last month of Tafoya have taken on international significance in the wake of reports that the arrest served as the catalyst for the Reagan Administration's recent decision to close the Libyan embassy in Washington as part of an effort to expose the Libyan government's use of terrorism as a political instrument, Tripoli has announced; for example, that it ordered the shooting of Zagallai.

Zagallai was shot twice in the head Oct. 14 by a man who gained access to his home by identifying himself as a job recruiter. Zagallai survived the shooting, but was blinded in one eye, and carries a .22 bullet in his skull.

Tafoya, a decorated 25-year veteran of the Marines and the Special Forces, as well as a member of a prominent New Mexico family, was arrested at

home April 22 after a pistol found near the scene of the shooting was traced to him.

Among the items confiscated in the raid of Tafoya's home were four passports in his name, according to an official involved in the investigation. One of the passports showed that Tafoya made three visits to Libya in 1980, two before, and one after the October shooting of Zagallai, the official, who has seen the passport, said.

— The longest of the three visits lasted from July to September 1980. According to the official, the passport carries the word "mission" in Arabic, which designates that the holder is in the country at the invitation of the government and on official government business.

What Tafoya was doing in Libya, and whom he met with has not been disclosed. However, investigators are looking into the possibility that, while he was there, Tafoya conferred with former CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson. Wilson and another ex-CIA man, Francis E. Terpil, were indicted in April 1980 by a Washington federal grand jury on charges of illegally supplying explosives and training terrorists for the Libyan government. Both have fled the country to avoid prosecution, and Wilson is now in Libya.

Found in Tafoya's residence at the time of his arrest was Wilson's business card. The card was for the Tripoli office of a Swiss-based company that Wilson controls, with its telephone number. Also on the card were the phone numbers for businesses Wilson controlled in London and Washington, D.C.

Contacted by telephone in Tripoli Friday, Wilson refused to be interviewed. Asked by a Globe reporter whether he knew Tafoya, Wilson said "I don't know anything about that at all," and then hung up.

About 15 local and federal officers, including 10 FBI agents and a police bomb squad, raided Tafoya's residence in Truth or Consequences, and arrested him without incident.

According to a court affidavit and a source involved in the investigation, also uncovered in the raid were writings of Tafoya that mentioned Wilson's name several times. In addition, the raid turned up:

- A passport that showed that in July 1980, before entering Libya, Tafoya visited the Mediterranean island of Malta, where Wilson has a villa. In August 1980, Wilson was detained in Malta at the request of the US State Department. But then, in a diplomatic snafu, he was released within 48 hours without US officials being informed.

- Tafoya's telephone records showing several phone calls to Libya. Investigators are trying to determine to whom the calls were made.

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